

I was completely baffled. (Words meaning ‘confused’)

On [June 14, 2017](#) By [Kate Woodford](#) In [Vocabulary](#)



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From time to time, we all find ourselves unable to understand things, whether it's instructions for a piece of equipment that confuse us, an event or situation that we can't explain or just a comment by a friend. Life is sometimes just confusing! This is reflected in the number of near-synonyms and phrases that describe being confused and things that confuse us. This week we thought we would take a look at them.

Let's start with some common near-synonyms for 'confused'. **Perplexed** is one: *Her speech left some of the audience looking perplexed.* **Puzzled** is another. Like perplexed, it means 'confused because you do not understand something': *He had a puzzled look on his face. / I'm a bit puzzled as to why she did that.* The adjectives **perplexing** and **puzzling** are used too, describing things that we do not understand: *I find their attitude quite perplexing. / In some ways, it's a puzzling novel.*

The word **baffled** is somewhat stronger, describing how we feel when we are completely unable to understand or explain something, and often surprised by it too: *Drivers were left baffled in Lancashire after seeing a mountain of apples at the roadside.* The *-ing* adjective **baffling** is used too to describe the thing that you are unable to understand: *Why would anyone do such a strange thing? It's baffling, isn't it?*

Bewildered is another near-synonym of 'confused' but this time with the additional meaning of 'not knowing what to do': *Elderly patients, looking bewildered, try to catch the doctor's attention.* The

adjective [bewildering](#) is also used, sometimes before nouns such as 'range' and 'array' (= large group of things). A 'bewildering range' or 'array' is a group of things so large that you do not know which to choose: *I had before me a bewildering array of options.*

Two other 'confused' adjectives with additional meanings are [dazed](#) and [disoriented](#). Someone who is dazed is unable to think clearly because they are extremely tired or shocked after an accident or bad news, etc.: *He had a dazed expression and was unresponsive.* Disoriented, meanwhile, means 'confused about where you are and where you are going': *Whales can become disoriented in shallow water.*

Turning now to phrases in this area, if something that is said or written doesn't [make sense](#), it cannot be understood: *This line doesn't make any sense.* If you can't [make sense of](#) something confusing, you can't understand it: *I've read the instructions three times and I still can't make sense of them!* If you are [at a loss](#) to do something, you are completely confused and do not know what to do or say: *I'm at a loss to explain what has happened.* Finally, if you are [at sea](#) or [all at sea](#), you are confused and do not know what to do: *No one has explained the new system to me and I'm all at sea.*

We hope you found our post helpful – and not in the least perplexing!

<https://dictionaryblog.cambridge.org/2017/06/14/i-was-completely-baffled-words-meaning-confused/>

*Ref.: I was completely baffled.docx
Friday, 02 October 2020*